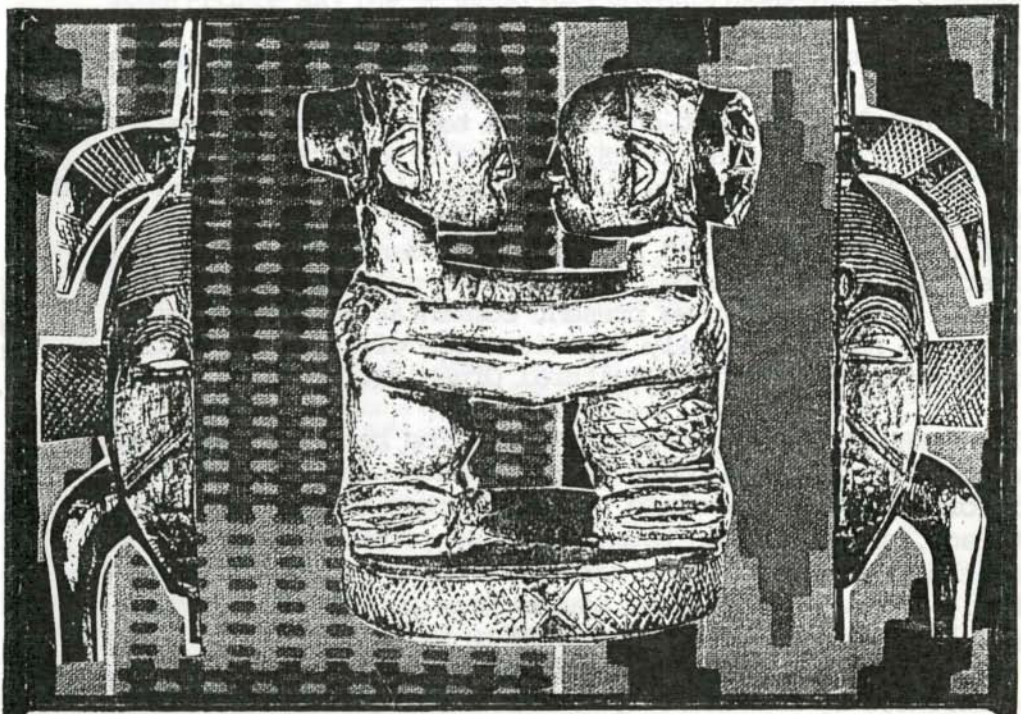
ARAMBE FLAME

Volume XXII No. 3 March 2001



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EDITORIAL POLICY

The HARAMBEE FLAME is the monthly newsletter of the Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization(Nebraska State Pen chapter). Ours is a pan-Africanist publication, meaning that we view all people of African descent as one African people, having certain basic interests in common. Also, the HARAMBEE FLAME attempts to be Africentric, in that, through study of the history, cultures, and traditional values of African people, we seek to have and cultivate an African way of looking at things.

The main purposes of the HARAMBEE FLAME are to stimulate and inform. We list "stimulate" first because, more than anything else, we want our readers to be moved to question their/your own ideas, lives, and the circumstances in which we live and to challenge those things that must be challenged in order for us to move from a condition of mental and spiritual servitude and physical dependence upon Caucasian institutions to a state of collective self-determination. Toward this purpose, we present commentaries, poems, etc. These do not necessarily represent the official positions of the Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization.

The HARAMBEE FLAME provides information because wise people want to know what's going on and because certain kinds of information can stimulate the mind, inspire people to want to act, and influence them to pursue proper understanding so that the actions they take will be as effective as possible. The main vehicle we use to provide information is our "From Other Sources" feature in which we make an effort to provide news about the problems we African people are confronted by and the steps we are taking to resolve them. In this feature, we try to provide coverage of the activities of African people and developments affecting us in the U.S., the nations of Africa, and elsewhere. In "Commentary," we offer analysis of and views about current events and developments.

We encourage you to send your comments, essays, poems, etc. to HARAMBEE FLAME; Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization; P.O. Box 2500; Lincoln, NE.; 68542-2500.

GUEST COMMENTARY

[We recently received this revised version of a message Borther Samuel Saleem of the Peacemaker One Foundation has been promoting in an effort to get African people in this country to remove "nigger"/"nigga" from our thoughts and speech. We also received from him a copy of a letter from the Association of Black Psychologists in which the Association expresses official support for the brother's efforts.]

SOME PEOPLE SAY THE "n" WORD AIN'T NOTHING BUT A WORD

What's in a word? A word expresses what you think and feel. Words have the power to build you up, or they can be used to break you down. The words that we use to identify ourselves and express our thoughts and feelings directly influence who we are and what we do with our lives. I view the "n" word as equivalent to a curse word that is one of the vilest words ever created in the history of the world. In fact, based on the enduring pain and suffering that the "n" word has caused us over the years, a strong case can be made to say that if there ever was a word that our community should view as an unspeakable curse word, it would be the "n" word. So, since we all know the word that's being referred to, let's try to understand why it will not be used in this message. The "n" word is an offensive, further corruption of the word "Negro", which has its origins in the Latin word "niger", meaning "black". It is the key brainwashing word that was used by the oppressors to plant their racist idea into the minds of our enslaved ancestors that black (as opposed to white) was bad, evil, ugly, inferior, bestial, or subhuman. Our continued use of the "n" word fertilizes this racist idea and influences our children to pass it down to their children.

Make no mistake about it. In order to control Africa and its vast natural resources, racist oppressors set out to demonize people of African ancestry and portray us to the world as being subhuman. They enslaved our ancestors and forced them to identify with the "n" word, and then they colonized Africa. The long term effects of these actions, supplemented with systematic racism, have influenced us to play into the hands of the oppressors, while many of us have been left with a view of ourselves that is tainted by the legacy of the "n" word. No other word expresses the demonization and dehumanization of a people better than the "n" word. Despite the term of endearment coolness that some of us have attached to the word, the Onomatology section of the Encyclopedia of Black America says that its use infers that black is evil and subhuman. The oppressors, through their control of the communication and entertainment industries, are now using the words out of our own mouths to tell the world, "See, we told you they were nothing but "n's". Look at them. They even admit it themselves."

As human beings, what we think and feel about ourselves determine how we behave towards each other. If we really want unity, and if we want to stop the violence and self-destructive behavior in our communities, we have to be honest about what we really think and feel about ourselves, because the negative thoughts and feelings that we have about ourselves ignite the self-destructive behavior. Self-destructive behavior includes behavior that is connected with self-inflicted violence or drug related activity, behavior that keeps us badmouthing every brother or sister who disagrees with us, behavior that keeps us from doing business with each other, behavior that keeps us from putting our money in a bank or some other financial institution that is owned by us, and behavior that keeps us from taking the necessary action to control our own communities, all of which help to keep us in disunity.

Even though we have been blessed by the Creator with an unconquerable human spirit that keeps us surviving against the odds, many (maybe even the majority) of us of African ancestry here in America think of each other as being the "n" word. That kind of thinking is the major determinant of what many of us feel about ourselves. We are in denial as to what it really means when we call each other the "n" word. Some of us even pretend that we call each other the "n" word because we love each other. If through our use of the word, we have been able to turn it around so that it now means something positive instead of something negative, why is it that we still treat each other the way we do? The truth is that we call each other the "n" word because many of us have been tricked into hating ourselves. Until we get the courage to love ourselves enough and respect the sacrifices of our ancestors enough to stop thinking of each other as being the "n" word, the disunity, violence and self-destructive behavior will continue.

Our people have a proud and unparalleled heritage. We are descendants of the first people and the foundation of this world. Historical records show that it was our ancestors who gave the world the essence upon which it now stands. We have gone from the top to the bottom, and now, we are being prepared to fulfill our destiny. We have endured cruelty beyond description, and still we rise. Yet, our journey has imbued us with a kindness of heart that sets the standard for humanity. None of us who survived what we have survived deserves to be referred to as subhuman, especially by us. We know better! Why choose to hold on to a word that represents the forced degradation of our beloved ancestors? Surely, the price that they paid for our freedom is worthy of our respect. *(Over please)*

To show true love and respect for our enslaved ancestors, the very least we could do is to stop degrading ourselves with the "n" word, and teach our children to do the same. We should honor our people and our divine struggle for dignity too much to ever refer to ourselves using the "n" word. As survivors of a system of enslavement that not only took away our African identity, but also imposed upon us a false identity that was defined as subhuman, our first step towards true freedom is to let go of the word that was used to falsely identify us as subhuman. Just let it go! Before we can reclaim our true identity, we have to be willing to give up the one that we know is false. We have been trying to function as free people without taking into account that most of us are still locked up in the box of "Negro mentality". That's why, over the years, it seems like we have been running around in circles. To be truly free, we have to get out of the box, and then show our people how to get out. The key that we need to get out of the box of "Negro mentality" is to develop the will to stop thinking of ourselves in that way.

"Negro mentality" is a creation out of the minds of racist oppressors that was forced upon and molded into the minds of our enslaved ancestors. "Negro mentality" equals "n" word mentality". "N" word mentality" equals "slave mentality". When those of us who are enlightened enough to acknowledge our African ancestry still use the "n" word or the word "Negro" to chastise others among us whom we view to be unenlightened, it shows that we are just as locked up in "Negro mentality" as the ones we are accusing. Neither word should be used to identify or define us as a people. The bottom line is that they both mean the same thing. One is just a little viler than the other. Let's not argue about this. If it's needed, just take the key, unlock the door and get out of the box. It's time to stop the HNIC syndrome. One of our greatest tasks is to understand that we can't be free and think we're "n's" at the same time. Let's be compassionate enough to each other to stop parroting the oppressors' racist and vile definition of us to put down our own people. We've survived too much pain from the oppressors to now inflict the same pain on ourselves. Poison is poison. No matter who pours it, the effects are still the same.

Police brutality and other oppressive acts happen to us because the oppressors and those whom they control think of us as being subhuman. How do we expect to get the strength of will to influence the oppressors to change their negative behavior towards us, if we don't get the strength of will to change our own negative thinking and behavior towards ourselves? We struggle every day to get people outside of our community to respect us as human beings. Shouldn't we at least try to put up a good fight to stop our own people from brazenly degrading each other with a word that means subhuman? When other people disrespect us and undertake various actions to show us their disrespect, we have left ourselves in a position where the only action that we usually take is to complain about what they did to us. After we finish complaining and ranting and raving, the same stuff happens over and over again. Enough is enough! Anyone with a heart can see that we need this message. A young brother even told me that no one in our community who is serious about change would disagree with this message. I hope that we will give it some serious thought. I don't know if all of us are going to accept it or not, but out of respect for our ancestors and the innocent blood that they have shed, Amadou what I gotta do.

While it is absolutely essential that we reclaim our African heritage, our true identity, as it is for all human beings, is that we are the children of the Creator of the heavens and the earth, created to be representative expressions of the truth of the Creator. As long as we embrace our use of the "n" word, we show our acceptance to falsely identify ourselves as the children of the oppressors, influenced to be representative expressions of the falseness of the oppressors. We are untrue to ourselves, and we participate in our own oppression. Just imagine how much better our behavior would be towards each other if none of us would dare think of ourselves as being "n's". Don't think it and don't say it. The very simple, self-respecting act of making a conscientious decision to remove the "n" word influence from the hearts and minds of our people will light up the divine spirit in the people and move us towards healing self-love and unity. This much we owe to our ancestors. With the Creator's help, and yours, we can do it. Go deep inside and meet us at the heart. Let's get serious about change. Spread this message.

What's your opinion? If you agree, let me know. If you disagree, tell me why.

Sam Saleem
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REVIEWS

[We recently received a c.d. by the mother-daughter team, Staajabu and Sananaa, known collectively as "Straight-Out Scribes." The c.d. is entitled "Mind Quake" and consists of poems and other spoken-word pieces and instrumental accompaniment. We asked Shaheed Khaleel Biko Hamza, our Eso Alakoso Asha(Sg.t-at-Arms/Chairman of the Cultural Affairs Committee) to share his impressions of these Sisters' project]

I've just listened to the c.d. by the mother/daughter combo, Straight-Out Scribes. The thought occurs to me that this period of poetry/hip-hop is rivaling the greatness of the Harlem Renaissance period. Almost in a mirror fashion, today's poets and rappers are creating some of the MOST BRILLIANT COMPOSITIONS ever to come out of the human mind. Sadly, some of the MOST AWFUL COMPOSITIONS are being put out. You will NOT discover the most brilliant music and/or poetry within the self-hatred parameters of the mainstream.

There are ten songs on this c.d. The entire project is uplifting. Three of these really grabbed me personally.

1) "Calling All Poets" - This reminds me of a "curse-prayer" I read by Zora Neale Hurston, contained in the book, In My Mother's Garden, by Alice Walker. This is a song requesting anyone, "with or without a voice," to speak up for political prisoners and prisoners of war in the U.S. before our silence allows The Beast to assassinate the physical body of Mumia Abu Jamal, and other revolutionaries. Love , pain and compassion are reflected in the vocal delivery most in this song.

2) "Transformation" - If I had to describe this song in one word, that one word would definitely be "metaphoric." This selection could possibly be the best track of the project.

3) "Hip-Hop Cool" - Here the Sisters explain that "there's

got to be more than sex, drugs, thugs, and soft-drink commercials" in hip-hop. I really connected with this selection, finding it to be in the tradition of Sonia Sanchez, Mari Evans, and Sista Souljah. The mix of hip-hop, jazz, Afrikan drum rhythms, and poetry was spiritually relaxing and soothing to the soul. This song concludes by encouraging us - rappers, poets, philosophers - to elevate our lyrics and daily lives to higher levels of thought, commitment, accountability, and understanding: "It's time to work, to make our dreams our reality. Meet me in a state of consciousness...and let's rap about it."

The real beauty of this project is that many cultural/social points are touched. A lot of constructive criticism are offered. But not once did I feel like I was being preached at. The message of the c.d. could be said to be: We're all in this together; we all need to do better; we all need to keep the code of mutual respect in mind. Additionally, the project is telling us that, when Afrikan consciousness arrives, don't fight it; let it awake you; let it hit you like a "Mind Quake."

-Shaheed Khaleel Biko Hamza

Congratulations to two of our members, Brother D. (Charles Douglas), our Akewi(librarian), and Kafele, who, as members of the prison chapter of Toastmasters International, won first place in "international speech competition" and "tall tales" categories, respectively. This contest took place here at the joint on March 20th. and involved participants from two outside chapters, as well as those from the inside chapter.

FROM OTHER SOURCES

Teacher in Brooklyn Gets the Axe for Instilling Sense of African Identity in Her Students

"Yaa Asantewa Nzingha has been a teacher for 20 years. For eight years she taught drama at the Ronald Edmonds Learning Center in the Fort Greene section of Brooklyn. In October 1999, the school's principal, Katherine Corbett, a Black woman, removed the popular teacher from the drama department and assigned her to teach sixth grade English and math.

"An investigation was being conducted by the Chancellor's Office of Special Investigations into allegations that Ms. Nzingha told her students not to refer to themselves as Americans and that she encouraged them to participate in a demonstration demanding her return to the drama program.
"On October 18, 2000, a protest in front of the school by students, parents and community activists did take place. And the following day Ms. Nzingha was barred from the school and told to report to the district office until January 20, 2001--her last day teaching in Brooklyn's District 13.

In a letter sent to the veteran educator by Dr. Lester Young, the district superintendent, a Black man, Ms. Nzingha was informed that she was fired because she was found guilty of: 'Soliciting students to participate in a protest march. Teaching children that they are not Americans, but Africans. Calling white people slave owners. And saying whites brainwashed Blacks'.

"In October 1999, a teacher named Richard Levine substituted for one period in Ms. Nzingha's drama class. The students refused to take part in a drama exercise that called for a male student to portray a thief. During a conversation, the students told the substitute that Ms. Nzingha said that they were African, therefore it would belittle them to play the role of thieves. They should have high standards as an African people, the students said...
"Dr. Ray Winbush, director of the Race Relations Institute

at Fisk University, called the firing of Ms. Nzingha a 'frontal attack on Black teachers who teach our children about their history, place and the challenges they will face because of race. We stand fully behind Yaa Asantawe Nzingha's struggle to teach an African-centered curriculum to our children. What the NYC Board of Education has said is simply that it is now illegal to teach Black people about themselves', he said."

-from "Teacher Fired for Telling Students They Are Africans," pages 7 and 25, Jan. 23 THE FINAL CALL (Chicago, IL)

National Association of Black Storytellers Fostering Our Oral Tradition

"...400 storytellers and scholars recently attended the 18th Annual National Black Storytelling Festival and Conference, 'In the Tradition..Preserving the Wisdom..Passing It On', in Rochester, New York. Participants from various parts of Canada, the United States and Barbados, West Indies, attended the four-day event, from November 15-19, 2000.

"'I was very pleased with the interest and turnout', said Snead. 'We had workshops that were standing room only and the vast majority of people who attended were made up of families and children. There was good support from the community'. More than 9,000 students enjoyed the festival's activities.

"Conference co-ordinator David 'Sankofa' Anderson agrees. 'Stories are still doing the same thing today that they did when I was a kid', smiles Anderson. 'Stories reach people. They are entertaining, educating and filling the spaces in people's lives'...

"Founded in 1982 by Philadelphia native Linda Goss and Mary Carter Smith of Baltimore, the National Association of Black Storytellers, Inc.(NABS) fosters the sharing of a rich oral tradition of African and African-American culture and stories...

"Today, NABS publishes newsletters and journals, as well as holds an annual storytelling festival and conference.

Members conduct or provide workshops and seminars to train persons interested in developing their skills in the art of storytelling and researching African-American oral histories. Stanley 'Bujoe' Butler of Baltimore serves as the national president...

"In the African oral tradition, the 'griot' was the historian of a tribal family and was responsible for remembering historical information...the griot, through the use of storytelling, recalled the people, events, places and stories that helped form a tribe or family's identity.

"'Storytelling is going to help us keep our humanity', adds Snead[Robert Snead, president of Black Storytelling League of Rochester]. 'We have all these modern inventions that keep us separated from each other...Poets, griots and storytellers will be necessary because they keep us connected'..."

-from "The Gift of Storytelling: Passing It On," pages 26-28, Feb. ABOUT...TIME(Rochester, N.Y.)

Sister in Los Angeles Takes Initiative to Insure African Voices Are Heard

..."Dr. Rosie Milligan is leading many Black readers/writers out of the bondage of under-representation through the 'freedom train' of her Los Angeles-based bookstore, Express Yourself, and her publishing company, Milligan Books.

"She is also successfully leading African American readers and writers to 'Freedom'--the freedom of choice. The freedom to have our collective voices heard. The freedom to read and write about our stories, which are unique stories of the African Diaspora here in America.

"In the past three years, Dr. Milligan has published over 70 Black authors...

"She recently published 'Why'? the story of John Carlos, the athlete who held his fist up in the Olympics of 1968. For over 30 years, this legendary tale of the greatest silent protest in history against racism was not told. Mainstream publishers were afraid to tell Carlos' side

of the story. A risk-taker, Dr. Milligan has not only published the book, she has scheduled radio and TV appearances for John Carlos and author C.D. Jackson...

"'The New Slave Ship', written by Melvin Farmer, is another landmark Milligan book. Farmer holds the distinction of being the first convict sentenced under the three-strikes law...

"Dr. Milligan, founder of Black Writers on Tour, will host the sixth annual conference in Los Angeles on April 14..."

-from "Having Her Say: Publisher Finds Success Telling Often Rejected, Usually Untold Tales"; page 37; Feb. 6 THE FINAL CALL

Prison-ISSUES Network Reactivated

"After several years of inactivity, an Emergency Response Network(ERN) has been re-launched to facilitate action among prison activists, supporters and campaigns.

"The ERN last had a presence in North America in 1989-'90, then again in the mid-'90s, before fading quickly. Situations calling for some sort of emergency response by non-prisoners range from hunger strikes, lockdowns, punitive transfers where regular contact with a prisoner is lost, action on behalf of Political Prisoners and Prisoners of War, political trials/prosecutions, criminal justice issues and more...The ERN now has a global focus, and is centered around action for all prisoners...

"To send an alert or report[or for further information about ERN], write to Houston ABCF
P.O. Box 667233
Houston, TX. 77266-7233..."

-from "Emergency Response Network for Prison Issues Re-Launched," page 1, Jan. ANARCHIST BLACK CROSS(Houston, TX.)

Books

[We have received a few books recently and take this opportunity to share with you information concerning them. We encourage you to spend money for books at bookstores owned by African people. In Omaha, there is the Aframerican bookstore at 3226 Lake St.)

BLACK LIFE IN MISSISSIPPI: Essays on Political, Social and Cultural Studies in a Deep South State by Julius E. Thompson; 2001; Published by University Press of America.

From the preface: "This book consists of six essays, which explore the life and culture of Black Mississippians between the 1860s and the 1980s. Five major themes are examined, including: 1)Black politics and leadership, as reflected in the career of Hiram Rhodes Revels(1827-1901), the first Black senator in American history during the Reconstruction era. 2)Black Mississippi efforts to develop the newspaper, newsletter and magazine as mediums of mass communication in the state. 3)The geographical location in Mississippi of lynch victims between 1865-1966, with a focus on the years 1889-1966. 4)Black education in Mississippi as expressed in the size and distribution of the graduates of Alcorn State University, the first historically-Black public supported university in Mississippi. 5)The social and cultural significance of the poetic work created by Black Mississippi poets between 1900-1980; and the role played by the Jackson Advocate, a Black newspaper, in promoting and publishing the poetry of Black writers in Mississippi, 1980-1985."

The author, Julius E. Thompson, is head of the Black Studies Program at the University of Missouri at Columbia.

AFRICAN AMERICAN JAZZ AND RAP: Social and Philosophical Examinations of Black Expressive Behavior, edited by James L. Conyers, Jr.; published by McFarland & Company.

From the back-cover notes: "Perhaps more than any other art form, music is the voice of a culture. Understanding what the voice has to say is vital to knowing the people who produced it. But what happens when only those outside

a culture are allowed to interpret its voice? What if the music is taken by commercial interests? Will the culture lose its voice, and thus its identity? How can a people reclaim their cultural expression? These are among the questions addressed in this collection of essays on African American jazz and rap music. The authors discuss where black music came from and where it may be headed."

AFRICAN AMERICAN JAZZ AND RAP is divided into 5 parts, with each part comprised of a number of essays. The parts are entitled, I ("Toward an Afrocentric Approach to the Study of Jazz and Rap Music"); II ('All That Jazz': History, Culture, Performers, Instruments, and Political Functionality"); III ("Jazz Expressions in Dance and Literature"); IV ("Rap Music as Art Form, Social-Political Commentary, and Economic Commodity"); V ("Toward the Future: Educating Future Generations and Preserving Cultural Traditions").

James L. Conyers is Chairman of the Black Studies Department at the University of Nebraska at Omaha and author of AFRICANA STUDIES: A DISCIPLINARY QUEST FOR BOTH THEORY AND METHOD.

THE STATE OF BLACK YOUTH IN PITTSBURGH: Perspectives on Young African Americans in the City of Pittsburgh and Allegheny County; edited by Major Albert Mason and Ralph L. Bangs; published by Urban League of Pittsburgh, Inc.

From the overview: "The book, modeled after the National Urban League's annual State of Black America, is the first focused on youth...The overall purposes of this book are to provide guidance to African American youth and to influence the adult community's actions and policies that impact their lives...Specifically, this book: Provides the reader with information that has not been readily accessible; gives the reader/youth information from an African American perspective; Enhances youths' ability to make good decisions for themselves and ultimately their community; Informs youth that they have positive role models and support systems; Informs policy makers and youth-serving professionals about the state of black youth."

THE STATE OF BLACK YOUTH contains a variety of essays by numerous writers and is broken down into 8 parts and is further divided into chapters. The parts are entitled:

"Cultural Awareness and 'Ourstory,'" "Who are the Youth? How well are they doing?," "Maximizing Educational Opportunities," "Improving and Maintaining One's Health," "Making Your Own Way: Job Opportunities and Entrepreneurship," "Maintaining a Positive Attitude and Overcoming Difficulties," "Involvement in the Community," "About Our Youth."

COMMUNITY NEWS

African History Program at State Prison

On the afternoon OF February 27th., we were getting ready for our African History symposium, which was scheduled for 5:00 that evening. The snow started and acted like it wasn't going to stop. By the time it did, we knew our "parade" had been "rained" on. Despite the snow, three folks from the outside--T.J., Imani, and Antwan--did make it. Imani, whose car was in the shop, actually rode a bus to get here. With conditions as bad as they were, none of the folks we expected from Omaha made it.

Mainly, our program consisted of the viewing of about forty minutes of the Ashra Kwesi video tape, "Afrikan Origin of Civilization." This segment covered the birth of humankind in eastern Africa, the history of Kemet(ancient "Egypt"), the role of European "scholars" in distorting the facts of history in order to try to diminish the importance of Africa and hype and/or manufacture European accomplishments, and the wonders of Kemetic and Dogon science and spirituality. This was followed by intense and enthusiastic discussion. In addition to the taped presentation and discussion, Damani, Biko, and Brother A did brief profiles of African historical figures. Biko and Nkrumah hit us with some conscious rap. Brother Reed, accompanying himself on keyboard, sang. Bashir was the mc for the program. We express our appreciation for the two brothers and sister who challenged the inclement weather to make it out here, the Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization members who handled the responsibilities of set-up and clean-up, and everyone else who contributed to an inspiring celebration of our history.

KUUMBA

SOMETIMES I FEEL LIKE A RIVER

Sometimes I feel like a River
Fluid, black, buoyant
Flowing
Through life,
Born near the Delaware
I've crossed the Mississippi
Followed the Colorado, the Rio
Grande
Walked paths by the St. Charles
The American, the Skukyill
The Hudson and the Nile
Seen my face mirrored
In living waters
Traveling everywhere
Running, rippling and raging
Constantly moving through time
Carrying me, carrying me
Carrying me home.

-Staajabu

BETWEEN THE APPLAUSE

Battered and bruised
internal organs burst and spurt blood
a ruptured spleen
a punctured kidney
blood drips behind blackened eyes
behind unseeing pupils
among dying brain cells
the blood rises til lungs fill from
the internal bleeding

The internal bleeding goes undetected,
uncorrected
only the cuts and bruises are treated
while the victim no longer weeps
just keeps the pain and misery inside
then lies down one day and dies

She didn't know

Cause of death? Hate

Cause of death? Not hate
but self-hate
not self-hate but
the absence of love
not the absence of love
but the overabundance
of defective, defeated, self-defeating love

She cried in the silent
spaces between the applause
felt withdrawals
sought to treat the dis ease
with drugs, drown it in drink
lose it in the pleasure of sleep
or cheap thrills in the arms of men she knew
but didn't understand

We've learned many ways
to hurt ourselves
learned many ways to
make each other scream
silent screams,
kill each other over
and over again
and bury love dreams

Cause of death?
Unmet needs that beat her down
til she believed that the bleeding
was normal comfort

and we treated the surface wounds
but couldn't see the cause
couldn't see the certainty
of slow death in her eyes
with the rise of the tide of blood

cause she was trapped
in a cage of unladylike rage

that turned in on her
pounded on her insides
til her very heart just exploded!

Too much blood
too much hate
not hate but love
not love but the absence of love
not the absence of love but
an overdose of misdirected,
misguided, tainted love.

Rest in peace sistahs

Rest in peace Billie
Rest in peace Phyllis

Cause we've learned
to redefine ladylike
let go of the rage
grow our own true love
turn it inward to nurture
to heal to find solace
in the silent spaces
between the applause.

(a tribute to Billie Holliday, Phyllis Hyman, et al)

-V.S. Chochezi

This mother-and-daughter team, Staajabu and V.S. Chochezi, are frequent contributors to the pages of the FLAME. The two of them comprise Straight Out Scribes, a multi-media performance and production team. They're based in Sacramento, California.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

For more information on Dr. Milligan's Publishing Company, log on to www.milliganbooks.com

The Provisional Government Republic of New Afrika comes together to commemorate its founding of 33 years. The theme titled "Building a National Strategy for Land and Independence, Honoring New Afrikan Freedom Fighters," will include a mass rally in an effort to free political prisoners, political education, transformative learning, food and cultural presentations. Some invited guests include congresswoman Cynthia McKinney, Geronimo Ji Jaga Pratt and Viola Plummer of the December 12th Movement. The demonstration will take place at Interdenominational Center, 700 Martin Luther King Dr. SW. For more information call (601) 949-8624.

A "Black Male Empowerment" conference will be held at the University of Nebraska at Lincoln on March 30th. & 31st. Psychologist, author, and founder of Mind Productions, Na'im Akbar is scheduled as a featured speaker. Also speaking will be Joseph L. White, who is a retired professor of clinical psychology at the University of California at Ervine. There is a registration fee of $10 for students and $15 for adults. For additional information on this conference, the contact person is Leon Caldwell, who may be reached at 472-6947.

The Department of Black Studies at the University of Nebraska at Omaha will be hosting a research colloquium on the topics of: Pan Africanism, W.E.B. DuBois, and Marcus Garvey on May 7-8, 2001. Research topics can focus on Educational, Literary, Political, Social, and Historical Studies with emphasis on Pan Africanism. W.E.B. DuBois, and Marcus Garvey. Selected papers will be prepared for publication.

BACK IN TIME

Oklahoma's first contingent of African-American settlers arrived during the 1830s and 1840s. They came as a result of the forced removal of the so-called "Five Civilized Tribes" from the southeastern United States to the Oklahoma Territory. These tribes...brought with them both African-American slaves and freedmen over the legendary "Trail of Tears." African-Americans and Native Americans intermarried. Leaders of the five tribes(Chickasaws, Choctaws, Cherokees, Creeks, and Seminoles) met with federal officials in Fort Smith, Arkansas, after the Civil War and the ratification of the Thirteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution. Resultant treaties provided for the liberation of the slaves and the adoption of freedmen into the tribes with accompanying annuity and land rights. Most former slaves eventually received allotments of land ranging in mass from forty to 100 acres. The number of African-Americans in the Oklahoma Territory exceeded 6,000 by the year 1870.

Many African-Americans came to the Oklahoma Territory in answer to the call of African-American Oklahoma "boosters." These boosters viewed the Oklahoma Territory as an escape from the racism, and sometimes barbarism, they faced in their home states...

The booster among boosters was Edwin P. McCabe, a prominent African-American from Kansas. McCabe was a Republican Party politician and the state auditor in Kansas before coming to the Oklahoma Territory in 1889. He dreamed of the day when the Oklahoma Territory would become an all-black state or, at a minimum, a state politically dominated by African-Americans...

The mere prospect of losing significant power and influence to African-Americans engendered a sense of dread among Oklahoma's governing elites. Some feared the possibility that McCabe could become the territorial governor. Southern white politicians and plantation owners, fearful that the creation of an all-black state would wreak havoc on their primary source of cheap, unskilled labor, sought to persuade African-Americans that Oklahoma land was not suitable for farming. -**Source:** BLACK WALL STREET by Hannibal B. Johnson

HARAMBEE AFRIKAN CULTURAL ORGANIZATION CREED

Together we seek to know that which is us, to expand our collective consciousness of who we are and whence we come. We exalt in the fact that Africans are beautiful in our own right, rather than at the expense of any other group of people. And in the true spirit of the Swahili word, "harambee," we promote the idea that cultural awareness is germane to human growth.

NGUZO SABA

Umoja - Unity
Kujichagulia - Self-determination
Ujima - Collective Work and Responsibility
Ujamaa - Cooperative Economics
Nia - Purpose
Kuumba - Creativity
Imani - Faith

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